

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 /026 W

----- 042589

R 281607Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO USDOC WASHDC

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1758

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, ELTN, NI

SUBJECT: MAJOR PROJECT: RAILROAD DEVELOPMENT LAUNCHED

REF: (A) STATE 146600; (B) LAGOS 5644

FOR MEPD

SUMMARY: NIGERIAN RAILWAY CORPORATION (NRC) TENDER FOR 3540 KILOMETERS OF TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY WORK IS OF MORE THAN ROUTINE INTEREST IN THAT IT LAUNCHES DOLLARS 770 MILLION STANDARA-GAUGE CONVERSION PROGRAM. THERE ALSO INDICATIONS THAT NRC MAY REOPEN SHORT LIST. FIRMS INTERESTED IN STANDARA-GAUGE PROJECT SHOULD BE APPRAISED OF TENDER AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE.

1. NRC OCTOBER 28 INVITED TENDERS (SUBMITTED SEPARATELY) FOR 3540 KM (2213 MILES) TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY WORK DIVIDED IN TWO RPOJECTS: 1) ENTIRELY NEW RAILROAD BRANCH LINE OTURKPO-AJAOKUTA (194 KM) TO CONNECT LAFIA COAL DEPOSITS WITH PALNNED IRON/STEEL MILL ON NIGER RIVER; 2) VIRTUALLY ENTIRE EXISTING MAIN LINE RAIL SYSTEM (ABOUT 3346 KM) DIVIDED INTO SEVEN MAJOR AND 15 MINOR SEGMENTS. THIS IS THE STANDARA-GAUGE CONVERSION PROJECT. DEADLINE IS NOON DECEMBER 1 RPT 1.

2. ALTHOUGH NOT PUBLICLY INDENTIFIED AS SUCH, INVITATION IS FIRST FOR ACTUAL ENGINEERING WORK IN 1975-80 DEVELOPMENT PLAN RAILROAD REBUILDING PROGRAM. FIRMS INTERESTED IN PROGRAM,
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WHICH MAY EXTEND WELL INTO 1980S, SHOULD TREAT INVITATION

ACCORDINGLY. INVITATION SPECIFIES FAIRLY DETAILED SURVEY AND ASKS RESPONDENTS TO SHOW PROGRAM OF WORK AND COMPLETION TIME. VALUE OF SURVEY ITSELF PROBABLY DOLLARS 2-3 MILLION.

3. NRC PROJECT MANAGER S.O. OMOJOSO DESCRIBES NEW BRANCH LINE TO PLANNED AJAOKUTA IRON/STEEL COMPLEX AS NRC'S "TOP PRIORITY" AT PRESENT. HE AND OTHER NRC PERSONNEL INTRODUCE NEW WRINKLE INTO STANDARD-GAGUE CONVERSION PROJECT BY CHARACTERIZING IT AS ESSENTIALLY A NEW RAILROAD FOLLOWING DIFFERENT ROADBED THAN PRESENT NARROW-GAUGE SYSTEM. PROJECT PREVIOUSLY DESCRIBED AS LAYING STANDARA-GAUGE TRACK ALONGSIDE EXISTING NARROW-GAUGE BUT EXCESSIVE CURVES AND GRADES EXISTING ROUTES WILL NECESSITATE LARGE-SCALE REROUTING, ACCORDING OUR SOURCES. THEY ADD THAT NEW AJAOKUTA BRANCH INVOLVES LARGE (3-4000 FEET) NIGER RIVER BRIDGE AND THAT DOUBLE-TRACK ROADBED ENVISIONED FOR MUCH OF STANDARD-GAUGE SYSTEM, ALTHOUGH ONLY ONE TRACK WILL BE LAID INITIALLY. SOURCES ALSO INDICATED THAT EARLY CONCEPT OF VERY HIGH SPEED SYSTEM LIKE JAPAN'S HAS BEEN MODIFIED TO 80-MPH SYSTEM.

4. REGARDING SHORT LIST, HERETOFORE CONSIDERED CLOSED BUT NEVER MADE PUBLIC, NRC OFFICIAL STATED RECENTLY THAT IN FEW WEEKS LIST WILL BE REOPENED BY INVITING FIRMS WHICH HAD BID TO RESUBMIT EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST. NO ROASON GIVEN BUT INDICATIONS ARE THAT NRC SEARCHING FOR FIRM OR FIRMS TO HANDLE ENTIRE STANDARD-GAUGE PROJECT. ONE OFFICIAL SPOKE OF TURNKEY APPROACH WHILE ANOTHER SAID NRC WANTS "CONSORTIA NOT CONSULTANTS." WE UNDERSTAND ON UNIDENTIFIED CONSULTANT IS DOING BROAD PROJECT OUTLINE FOR NRC, TO BE COMPLETED MID-1976.

5. REALIZE THERE MANY PUZZLING ASPECTS BUT SUGGEST FOREGOING BE PROVIDED FIRMS INTERESTED THIS PROJECT: PULLMAN (SWINDELL DRESSLER), MORRISON-KNUDSEN, STANLEY CONSULTANTS, SVERDRUP AND PARCEL, TAMS RPT TAMS AND ANY OTHERS KNOWN TO MEPD.

6. FOLLOWING PRIVILEGED: ALTHOUGH TAMS INTEREST NOT PREVIOUSLY EVIDENT, IT APPEARS TO BE ONLY AMERICAN FIRM STILL FOLLOWING RAIL PROJECT. F. STANLEY GLYNN, TAMS NORTH AND WEST AFRICA DIRECTOR, HAS BEEN IN LAGOS TWO MONTHS INVESTIGATING RAIL AND OTHER PROJECTS. TAMS AWARE OF FOREGOING BUT ITS SPECIFIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REACTION UNKNOWN TO EMBASSY. TAMS SHOULD BE INFORMED OF TENDER INVITATION. TAMS NEW YORK CONTACT IS DONA E. LOW, CODE 212 755-2000. EASUM

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RAILROADS, INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES, COST ESTIMATES, INVITATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LAGOS10581
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750374-0606
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751015/aaaaamsz.tel
Line Count: 110
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 146600, 75 LAGOS 5644
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 JUN 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <17 NOV 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MAJOR PROJECT: RAILROAD DEVELOPMENT LAUNCHED
TAGS: BEXP, ELTN, NI, NRC-NIGERIAN RAILWAY CORPORATION
To: COM
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006